

CIRCLE OF LIFE

Life cycle of a Penguin



Grow with me





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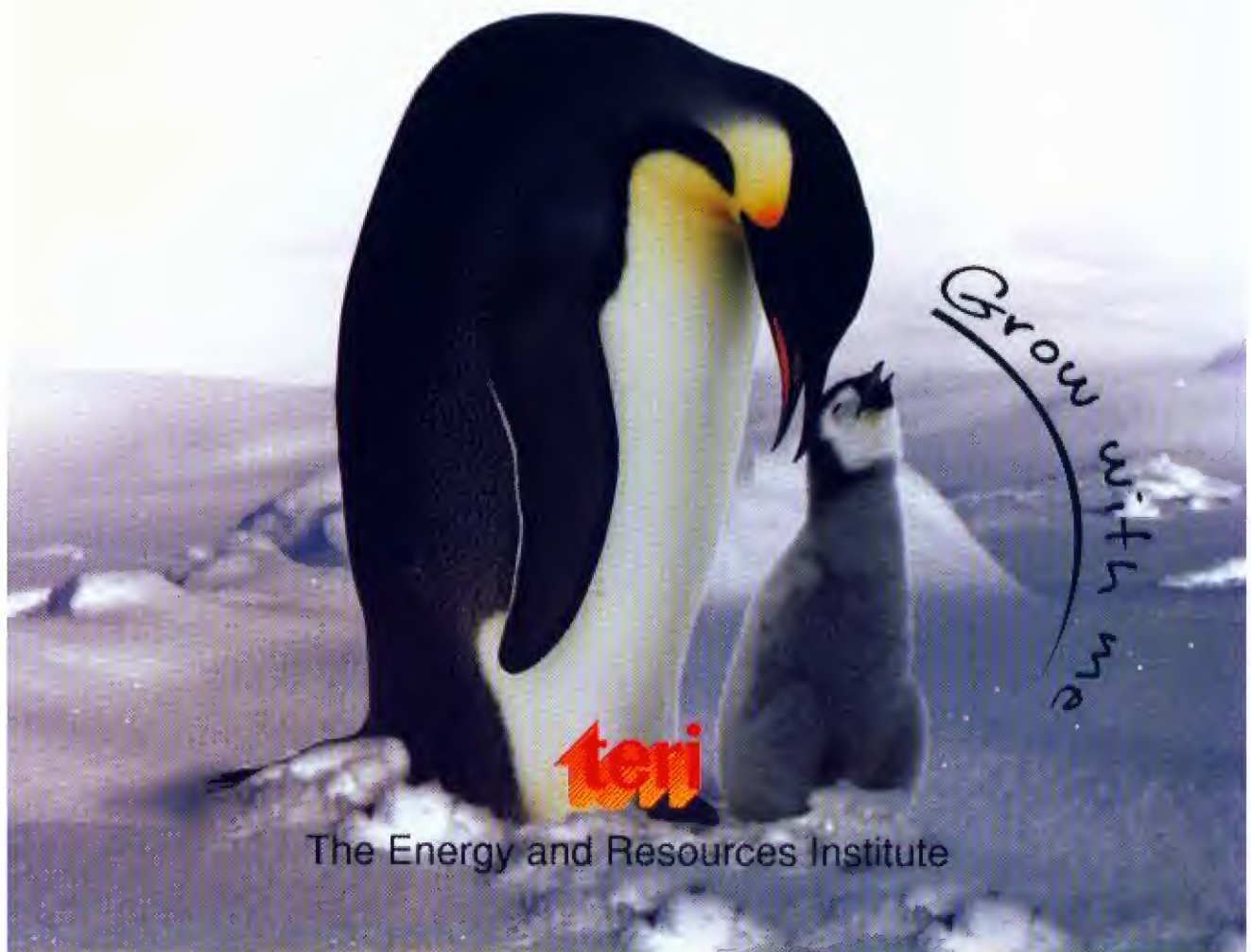
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Life cycle of a Penguin



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Daintily dressed

The penguin is one well-dressed bird. Take a look at its smart black coat and white shirt! But it cannot fly at all. It has strange wings called flippers, that help it in swimming.

Penguins spend some part of their life on land and some in the ocean waters.



TAKE CARE

Penguins are friendly and trusting birds. People who visit areas where penguins live should not alarm them. These gentle birds cannot fight back or run and hide.





Though penguins are great underwater swimmers, penguin chicks cannot swim. In fact, the little chicks do not enter the water till they are grown up. If they did, they would find it too cold, and their soft feathers would get all sticky and wet.

Then how do penguins grow into diving champs, who spend long hours in the sea?



Let's find out **More...**

Penguins cannot breathe under water. They can, however, hold their breath for as long as twenty minutes. That's how they remain under water for so long.

Living life

Different living beings have different kinds of life cycles. Some start as caterpillars and grow into butterflies. Some, like kangaroos, live in special pouches till they are big enough. Baby penguins hatch out of eggs, like any other bird.



TAKE CARE

If our earth becomes too hot, the ice-covered regions on our planet will melt, and the penguins will have no place to live.



Penguin eggs are white to bluish or greenish in colour. Some eggs are round, while others are shaped like pears. A nest of eggs is called a clutch. Usually, a clutch contains two eggs.

Let's find out More...

Penguins are found only in the southern hemisphere of the earth, especially Antarctica.

The mother comes back to hatch the eggs

Penguin parents feed their chick

Parental pet

Mother and father penguins swim for many miles across the cold sea to reach a special place called a 'rookery', where the eggs are to be laid. Once they reach the rookery, they jump up and out of the water. This must be the few times that penguins are actually in air! Then they waddle inland.

Let's find out **More...**

Penguins return to the same rookery that they were born on, to lay their eggs.



The rookery becomes home to several hundred penguins and gets rather crowded!

Some penguin fathers build homes before the mother arrives. Soon, the mother penguins lay eggs, which are white to greenish blue in colour.

King penguins are very vocal and cheerful at the rookery sites.

TAKE CARE

People visiting the penguin areas should be careful not to scare the birds away from their eggs. If an egg rolls away from the parents, it will not survive.



Close connect

After laying the egg, the mother penguin goes off for a meal. She has to swim really far to find food, so it may be fifteen days or more before she returns. During this time, the father penguin takes good care of the egg. He keeps it warm and sees that it doesn't roll off. Most fathers keep the egg safely on their feet and cover it with their warm body.



TAKE CARE

Sometimes, big ships carrying oil, spill it in the sea or ocean. The oil sticks to the feathers of the penguins, and this prevents them from flapping their wings and swimming freely.



When the mother returns, the father goes out to eat. About a month later, the little chick hatches from the egg. It immediately starts calling out loudly. It is very noisy in the rookery now, with all the little chicks calling out to their parents!

But the parents learn to recognize their chick's voice from the rest.

Penguins have a lifespan of about fifteen years.

Let's find out More...

If a mother penguin loses her egg, she may try to steal an egg from another penguin. But the other penguins don't let her!

Discovering day care

The little penguin chicks are covered with soft feathers. They don't have waterproof feathers like their parents. So the chicks don't enter the water. When the chicks are very small, the parents take turns to go out and bring fresh food from the sea for them.

Let's find out More...

Penguins have spikes on their tongues. This stops slippery food like fish from falling out!

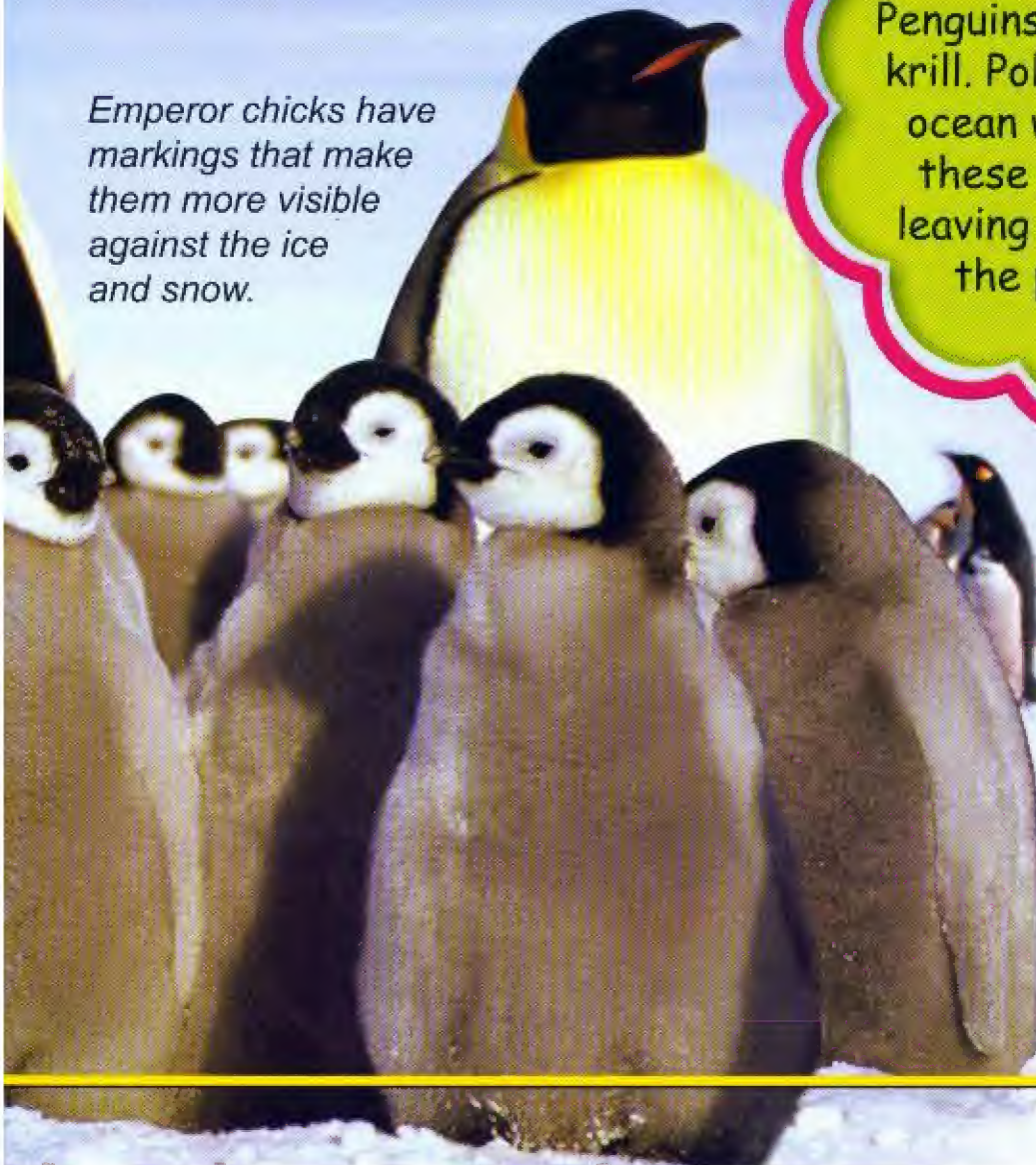


After a month, all the little chicks in the rookery are left together in a group, and both parents leave to look for food. Almost like a day care centre! The chicks huddle together, so they don't feel cold. And some parent or the other is always coming and going. But the mother and the father will only feed their own chick!

Emperor chicks have markings that make them more visible against the ice and snow.

TAKE CARE

Penguins eat fish and krill. Pollution in the ocean waters kills these creatures, leaving no food for the penguins.



Chosen chick

Once the little chick develops its waterproof coat of feathers, it is ready to leave the rookery. This happens when it is almost four to five months old. Now it is big enough to go to the sea and look for food, all by itself.

Let's find out More...

Penguins can swim at a speed of fifteen to twenty kilometres per hour.

The black and white body of the young penguin is a great protection against enemies like the leopard seal or the killer whale. With its light coloured under-parts it is difficult to see the penguin under the water. Its dark coloured upper parts also make it difficult to spot from above.

TAKE CARE

In the past, penguins have been killed for their skin. Their skin is used to make caps, slippers, purses and various other accessories.



On land, penguins either waddle or slide on their bellies. After almost two years, a penguin returns to the rookery to lay eggs of its own.

Once it has a waterproof coat, the young penguin spends most of its time in the icy cold water, catching fish with its beak and swallowing it, head first.



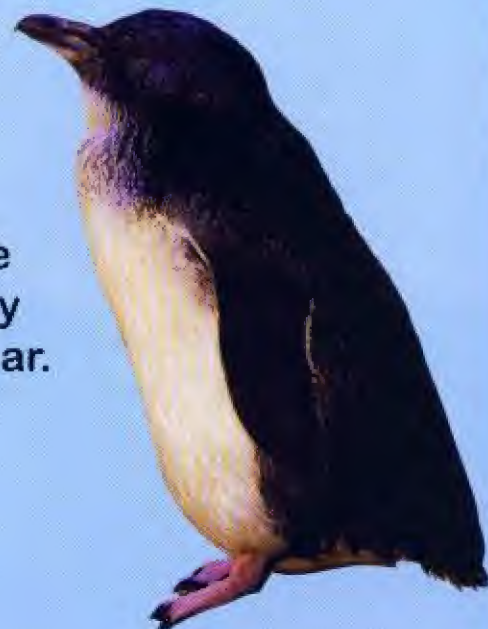
Penguins, penguins, penguins!

There are many different kinds of penguins. Take a look at all these smart little fellows. They have the same life cycle, though they may lay eggs at different times of the year.

Rockhopper penguin

Did you guess? It bounces from rock to rock and builds its nest in rocky areas.

Rockhopper penguin



Little blue penguin

Let's find out **More...**

Penguins drink salty sea water. They have a special system in their body, which removes the salt from the water and pushes it out of their beaks!



Little blue penguin

Also known as the fairy penguin, this penguin is just sixteen inches tall!

Macaroni penguin

Just look at its colourful head!

Emperor penguin

The largest of the penguins, it stands at almost four feet.



Emperor penguin



Macaroni penguin



TAKE CARE

If there are too many human beings around, penguins feel stressed. This affects their ability to look after their chicks.

How do penguins keep warm?

Penguins live in the earth's coldest zone. But these birds have a wonderful way to keep themselves warm.

Penguins have a layer of fat called 'blubber' just under their skin. This is like a thick woollen jacket, which keeps them warm. Over the skin is a layer of fluffy feathers, like a soft quilt. Covering all this is the layer of outer feathers, which keeps the cold and icy winds out.

Penguins also rub oil on their feathers to keep away the cold, wind, and water. The oil comes from a gland at the base of the penguin's tail and makes the feathers look shiny. And if that isn't warm enough, penguins huddle close to each other. Now that's really nice and cozy!





THIS IS A
GREEN
BOOK

Life cycle of a Penguin

How does a bunch of tiny eggs change into a beautiful butterfly? What happens to a tadpole's tail when it grows into a frog? How does a baby whale drink its mother's milk to grow big and strong? Who looks after the elephant calf? When does a joey leave its mother's pouch? There's a lot of love, care, and magic in nature's circle of life. Read on...

Other titles in this series:

- Life cycle of a Butterfly
- Life cycle of an Elephant
- Life cycle of a Frog
- Life cycle of a Kangaroo
- Life cycle of a Whale

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